

News Release

U of M Crookston Torch & Shield Award Recipients for 2013 Honored

By *Itolles on Thursday, October 24, 2013* Honoring those who have aided in the development of the University of Minnesota Crookston, the Northwest Research and Outreach Center (NWROC), and Extension is the purpose of the Torch & Shield award. This celebration of leadership is the highest honor presented by the Crookston campus and a special recognition event was held on Wednesday, November 6, 2013, on the campus.



Charles "Chuck" Habstritt a retired University of Minnesota Crookston Associate Professor is highlighted with achievement and a legacy of dedication to students during a 40-year teaching career.

He graduated in 1967 with a bachelor of science in agronomy/soil science from the University of Minnesota. Transferring to North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D., Habstritt obtained his master of science in 1969 majoring in agronomy with an emphasis in soils, biochemistry, and plant physiology.

Habstritt began his teaching career in 1969 at the U of M Crookston where he specialized in agronomy and soils. He was named outstanding educator by students three times and in 1999, he was selected to receive the Distinguished Teaching Award by his colleagues. In 2007-08, Habstritt was honored with the University of Minnesota's John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising. In the U of M system, the Tate Awards recognizes and rewards high-quality academic advising.

From 1970 to 2009, Habstritt served as a coach to the highly successful Collegiate Crops Judging Team on the Crookston campus. He was also responsible for compiling the rules and regulations book that has been used for national contests in both Chicago and Kansas City. He has coached his teams to top-three finishes more than 25 times. Habstritt has developed and taught 13 courses, advised some 40-50 students a year, trained teaching assistants, published, and solicited funding for scholarships to keep and attract top students for his program. He found time during his career to manage his grain, oil seed, and grass seed farm and was recognized with the Honorary State Farmer Degree. During his career, Habstritt also served as assistant coach for hockey, and in 1986, he received the University of Minnesota Regents Award for Excellence in Coaching.

Together with collegiate hockey, Habstritt also found time to coach 32 hockey teams including squirts, peewees, and bantams. Today, Habstritt and his wife, Christine, reside in Casa Grande Ariz. in the winter and Rocky Point on the Lake of the Woods in the summer. Although retired from teaching, he still farms with his brother near Roseau, Minn.

Lynn Willhite has been a studio artist in Crookston, Minn. for the past 25 years. Primarily a



textile artist, she works with dye and fabric to create watercolors on fabrics. She sells and shows her work at regional and national art shows. She has generously donated several of her wearable art pieces to support scholarships at the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Willhite's creativity and innate talent have benefitted students across the Crookston campus where she has devoted her countless hours to decorating the residence halls, including Centennial, Evergreen, and most recent--Heritage Hall. These halls attest to her great style and her dedication to making the residence halls beautiful places for students to live and study.

She is a graduate of Minnesota State University Moorhead with a degree in elementary education. Over the years, she taught at the Early Childhood Education Center at the University of Minnesota Crookston and served as an adjunct instructor, teaching drawing and design. Sharing her talent has benefited not only the campus but the Crookston community where she taught community education classes in watercolor for beginning students.

Willhite moved to Crookston in 1978, with her husband Gary, who is the director of Residential Life and Security. Together, they robustly worked on the very popular Community Stable Service, a live nativity showcased at the U of M Crookston in the arena in the University Teaching and Outreach Center.

She has been an ongoing volunteer in the Crookston community through her church, as well as the schools, working on fundraisers and several committees. She has been a past president of the UMC Faculty Association and has proudly been the leader of 4-H and was responsible for starting the first Cloverbuds program, a pre-school program for siblings of 4-H members. The Torch & Shield Award honors contributions of significance to higher education, the Crookston campus, and the region; recognizes champions of the U of M Crookston, NWROC, and Extension for their impact on the region through teaching, research, and outreach; and distinguishes both high profile individuals and those who have been "quiet" contributors to the success of the Crookston campus.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 28 bachelor's degree programs, 20 minors, and 39 concentrations on campus--as well as 11 degrees online--in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photo at top, right, in the back row are Corby Kemmer, director of Development & Alumni Relations, Chancellor Fred Wood, and Albert Sims, director of operations at the Northwest Research and Outreach Center. In the front row are Chuck Habstritt (left) and Lynn Willhite.

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